

Growing Taller

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Summary: Astrid likes Hiccup. Hiccup likes Astrid. So whats keeping them apart? The fact that Astrid can't stand it when a boy is shorter than her. But she'd never let Hiccup know that. So, he's forced to wait for her. But how long will it take? COMPLETE!

1. When?

I hate this!

Astrid was so frustrated, because there was so much to be frustrated about. Herself, her cursed feelings, her life in general. But most of all she was frustrated at that small, skinny, dragon-riding kid that had stolen her heart...somehow. He was the exact opposite of what Astrid imagined herself falling for. Although, she wasn't quite sure what kinds of guys she was into. All she knew is that she liked Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III.

And she hated it. Because she couldn't go out with him. There was something stopping her. And Hiccup was forced to wait. It's not like she didn't want to, it's just that she couldn't...yet. A time would come when she could march right up to Hiccup and declare him her official boyfriend. Such was Astrid's nature to be demanding. But when?

She swatted at answer-less questions flying around her, and shook her head clear. She had been lying on her favourite grassy hill just outside of Berk all afternoon, so she could avoid her mother and the chores list. Now that she was getting older and more Viking-like, the chore list had begun to shrink, but it was still there. And with all her teenage-girl-problems nagging her lately, she just wasn't in the mood for chores.

Her Deadly Nadder was lying not so far from her in a grove of dandelions. Her saddle still strapped to her back. That was the good thing about having your very own Dragon, you could get away from a

screaming mum, and she wouldn't be able to chase you down. The hill was situated on a rough cliff-side in the ocean outside the village, after all.

Finally she decided to stop with all the thinking. It was doing her head in. She was at her secret place that no-one else knew about, so no-one would be able to annoy her. He closed her eyes.

"I thought I'd find you here."

Her eyes shot open at the sudden noise that had broken the sweet silence. A face had taken the place of the blue sky she was staring at before. And not just any face, it had to be his face.

She was startled and instinctively shot up, bumping their foreheads together painfully.

"Gah! What was that for?" Hiccup whined, grasping his head.

"For scaring me!" Astrid replied despite that she also was clutching her thumping forehead. "How did you know where I was?"

"Toothless saw you when we were flying." He explained, gesturing toward the Nightfury that had accompanied him. "He's got great eyesight after all."

"Tch...Dammit. I wanted to be alone." She grumbled and turned back towards the downside of the hill.

"O-oh..you did?" Hiccup asked from behind her.

"Duh. Why else would I fly out to a place like this with no other people?" Astrid mumbled.

"Oh I see...Well, I had some stuff I needed to do anyway. I'll catch you later." Hiccup said. His shadow passed over Astrid as he stood up and turned towards Toothless. Astrid glanced over her shoulder at him and spotted a flash of soft colour in his hand.

"Hey wait! What's that you've got?" Astrid asked, rising to her feet.

Hiccup was startled. "W-what? I don't know what you mean?" He fell over his words as he backed away from her, holding his right hand behind his back. "I don't have anything."

"Oh yea cos it's not obvious when you hide it behind your back. What is it?" She yelled, getting closer to him.

"N-no! it's nothing."

"Show it to me!"

Hiccup felt something hard on his back, and he turned to see a big boulder over his shoulder, blocking his escape.

"You're cornered!" Astrid exclaimed. "Now out with it!"

Hiccup used the rock against his back to his advantage. He squished the bouquet of flowers between his back and the boulder, before

pulling out his right hand, as proof he had nothing.

"Look, I don't have anything! See?"

Astrid searched his face. At first he was worried she wouldn't fall for it. But apparently something distracted her, as her eyes suddenly widened.

She realised something as she stared up at Hiccup. He was taller than her! Finally! She was at a loss for words.

"Oh my god... Hiccup..." She began, growing uncomfortably close. Hiccup looked confused.

"What? Is there something on my face?" He asked, looking down at her.

"No..." Astrid continued to act weird. But then she realised that Hiccup wasn't actually any taller than he was yesterday. It was merely because he was standing on the high side of the hill that he seemed to tower over Astrid. "Oh wait...never mind." Astrid said as her sarcastic tone came back. She stared at her feet before turning around, a little embarrassed that she had let herself go for a split-second.

"What's gotten into you?" Hiccup asked as she went back to her spot on the grassy hill, staring at the afternoon sky.

"Nothing, don't worry about it. Didn't you say you had stuff to do?" She mumbled.

"Oh yea, right." Hiccup grabbed the bouquet and skilfully shoved it into Toothless's saddle bag. "Well I guess I'll see you later." He hopped onto Toothless's back and clicked his prosthetic foot into the pedal.

"Yea...later." Astrid said back. Without another word, Toothless sped off into the sky.

As soon as he was gone Astrid swore loudly to herself.

"I'm so stupid!" All her frustrations began to return. _That_ was why she hadn't been able to go out with Hiccup yet. Her biggest rule when it came to boys was that they had to be taller than her. If they weren't, for some reason she felt put-off. And she was so angry that this was such a big issue for her. She obviously liked Hiccup, but she always pushed him away. And she felt terrible for it. But it felt like there was nothing else she could do. It's just who she is. She felt even worse when she imagined how it must've made Hiccup feel, since he's liked her long before she even knew him.

She watched the black blur of the Nightfury fade into the distance as he and his human headed back to the village. Those two were so seamless together, she thought. And now that they both have a handicap they're able to understand each other even better. Although with Hiccup it's impossible to tell, since the foot he made is so awesome.

She continued thinking to herself. If it wasn't for Sky coming over to her and nudging her with her nose, indicating she was hungry,

Astrid could've stayed on the hill all night. She sighed and got up, before mounting Sky and taking off in the direction Hiccup had gone.

2. Why?

Growing Taller

Disclaimer: I do not own Dreamwork's How to train your Dragon.

Chapter 2: Winter's coming.

Hiccup rode on the back of Toothless, towards Berk. With a sigh he slumped in the saddle. He felt like smacking himself.

"I couldn't do it today either." He muttered to the Nightfury, who made a dragon sound in reply. "Argh I hate this! Why is it that I can kill an enormous Green Death, save the entire village and make myself a new foot, but I can't ask out a girl?" He quickly adjusted the tailfin with his metal foot as Toothless smoothly swerved around a flock of birds. "I mean, I've always had girl problems. But I didn't think I'd have this much trouble after a girl had already grabbed me by the shirt and kissed me! I thought after that that things would just happen...you know...automatically. But apparently not." Once again, Toothless screeched a reply, somehow able to understand every word Hiccup was saying. But of course, Hiccup couldn't understand him. He smiled.

"Thank you for summing that up..." He said simply.

They arrived back at the house and Hiccup relieved Toothless of the leather saddle, flinging it over the fence outside his house. He opened the door wide and ushered Toothless inside. Despite his size, Toothless seemed to fit right in at Hiccup's house. Stoick had long since accepted him, and Hiccup felt bad making him sleep outside. They both went straight to the fireplace and Hiccup loaded it up with wood, before stepping aside as not to get caught up in the blast of fire Toothless used to ignite it.

Before settling down, Hiccup grabbed his sketchbook, as he did every night, and a charcoal stick to draw with. Feeling randomly nostalgic, he started flipping through all the past drawings. He acknowledged all the sketches of Toothless that filled the pages. Said black dragon stared over his shoulder at the pictures, looking quite pleased. Hiccup laughed at his partner's expression. He continued to flip through the book, but stopped when he got to a drawing that was done on the back page. It was an unfinished sketch of Astrid. Hiccup's face turned red. He began this drawing the night he went on that romantic flight through the skies over Berk with her. For some reason that he couldn't remember, he hadn't finished it. Picking up the make-shift pencil, he began to add fresh strokes of charcoal to the page. Toothless eyed the movement of the stick, fascinated.

About an hour later Stoick returned from a meeting with other Vikings bearing good news. He joyfully stomped over to Hiccup at the fireplace.

"Hiccup my boy!" He bellowed in his Scottish drawl. "We've done it, I convinced the elders to except you on the annual hunting trip coming up!"

"Huh? What hunting trip?" Hiccup asked.

"The traditional coming of age hunting trip! Kids learning to be Vikings leave on that trip, and come back big and strong!" Stoick explained, still overjoyed.

"That hunting trip?" Hiccup asked, a bit sceptical. "But isn't that trip for like, 12 year olds? I'm already 16! Anyway, when did I say I wanted to go on that?"

"The other week you did." Stoick said, turning away. He was obviously pretending. Hiccup gave up. Even after he almost died his father was still deciding stuff for him.

"Don't worry I'm sure you'll do yourself proud." He attempted to reassure.

"Do you proud, you mean." Hiccup muttered under his breath. "So how long does it go for? A week? Two?"

"No, no, no, no! It's takes at least 4 months to build a Viking!"

Hiccup's face turned pale. "Four...Months?"

"At least!" He winked, before walking off happily. Hiccup fell backwards against Toothless, who was curled up in a semi-circle around the fireplace.

'Four months...I can't be gone for that long!' Hiccup thought frantically. 'What if Astrid finds another guy while I'm gone...?'

Toothless bent his head down and nudged Hiccup with his nose, comforting him. Hiccup lifted a hand to give him a scratch on the neck. Toothless nearly purred in response.

Hiccup smiled briefly, but it didn't last long. With a sigh he stood up, grabbed a coat and headed outside for a walk. Toothless stared after him, not knowing whether to follow or not. In the end, the fireplace was too warm to leave.

As soon as Hiccup stepped outside he was bowled over by a cold wind. Winter was definitely on the way. And unless Hiccup could think of some way to get out of it, he would be camping in the snow for six months, in the wilderness, away from home.

And away from Astrid.

Hiccup's 1 foot plus his replacement had subconsciously carried him along the path to said Young female Vikings house. 'Oh well...' He thought. 'As if she'd be out at this hour anyway.'

As he turned a corner and Astrid's house came in sight, he discovered that Astrid was in fact out at that hour. She was half standing in her hut outside the house, talking to the blue Nadder that lived in there. Hiccup panicked at the sight of her. He stopped his feet

moving forward but his upper body continued. To stop himself falling forward he flung himself around in a silly-looking manner and hid behind a tree just off the pathway next to him. Breathing hard, he peeked around the trunk at her. It was hard to focus on her figure in the darkness, but he was just close enough to hear what she was saying.

"Haven't you had enough already?" She was saying to Sky, her Nadder, who was blissfully munching from a basket of fish. "You have to save some for tomorrow."

When Sky didn't stop, Astrid took the initiative, and closed the basket's lid, tying it tightly shut.

Sky looked at her with puppy-dog eyes. "Don't look at me like that Sky...You're reminding me of him..." She muttered. Hiccup's eyes widened. '_Him_...?' His heart started beating rapidly. '_Who could she mean?_' He leaned further around the tree.

Astrid sighed and sat beside her dragon. "I can't believe the only one I can talk to about my problems is my dragon...At least I know you'll always understand me."

Hiccup felt heartbroken. He and Astrid had always been able to talk to each other about anything. The only reason she wouldn't talk to him about her problems would be...

"If I'm the problem..." He muttered aloud, almost instantly realising his mistake. Astrid thought she heard mumbling, and turned. Hiccup made himself as skinny as possible on the other side of the tree trunk. (Not that that was very hard) Finally after a tense couple of seconds he heard the grass shifting as Astrid stood up.

"I'm hearing things now, Sky." With that, she closed the hut's door, and went inside.

Hiccup didn't move from his spot. He had never felt this feeling before. It was like all those times back before Toothless when Astrid would ignore Hiccup's attempts to attract her attention. That pain, only ten times worse. He gripped his chest and started breathing hard. Everything he was thinking about before all seemed too meaningless and _stupid_. He was nearly laughing.

It was too late now.

Hiccup wasn't good enough for Astrid. He wasn't before; whatever made him think that he would ever be?

He stood up and ran home in a blur. He crashed through the door and Toothless and Stoick looked up in concern, but before they could ask, he was slamming his bedroom door in their faces.

All of a sudden, that Four month-long hunting trip was sounding really good...

**Ya know it's funny, a couple people reviewed saying stuff like "maybe if hiccup went away for a few months and came back..." ...yea, that was kinda the plan from the start... So please don't think that I'm stealing your idea! Thankyou so much shunxalice as well as mks 12 98 ()**

3. What?

Growing Taller

Disclaimer: I do not own DreamWorks's How to train your Dragon.

Chapter 3: Astrid curled up in her blankets to sleep. It was already past midnight, but Astrid had been awake, talking to Sky. She had had a lot of trouble sleeping lately, going to bed really late and waking up really early. If she tried to get to sleep at an earlier time, she would lie awake, tossing and turning. This whole area of her life was filled with unrest. She rolled over, and tried not to think too much about anything.

However one thing was playing on her mind. Earlier when she was talking to Sky she could've sworn she heard someone mumbling nearby. It had startled her, but she didn't think much of it. But now that it had come up again in her mind, she wondered just who it could have been. What if there was some creepy stalker following her around? If that was the case then they knew where she lived! The more she thought about it, the more frightened and unable to sleep she became. It was going to be a long night.

As the sun rose over Berk, stretching its rays across the landscape, Astrid stretched her limbs. She had had a grand total of 3 hours sleep, and was not in a good mood. If there was a creepy stalker following her, she telepathically warned them to stay away if they knew what was good for them. He angrily rubbed her eyes, threw on her usual leather spiked skirt, leggings and blue shirt, before heading downstairs.

She plonked herself down at the table, and started munching down on the food her mother had already set for her.

"Morning, Astrid." She said from her chair where she was drinking tea. Astrid made a muffled, grumbling sound in reply. "When are you leaving?" her mother asked. Astrid stopped eating and looked up at her.

"Leaving? What do you mean?" She asked.

"Remember? Gobber asked for you and Hiccup to help the kids to train their dragons." She said, before taking another sip of her tea.

"Oh shiâ€!" Astrid quickly gulped down the rest of the food on her plate and hopped towards the door while pulling on her fur boots.

"Don't forget your coat, it's freezing out there."

Astrid blew hot air into her palms as she treaded over the frosty rocks towards the Cliffside arena where they trained the dragons. When she arrived, she noticed the kids lined up in front of a lecturing Gobber, with Hiccup standing off to the side. 'I'm late!' She ran the rest of the way through the small tunnel that led down into the arena, and pulled up next to Gobber, throwing out apologies.

"Nice of you to join the party!" Gobber said sarcastically, turning away from the kids.

"So, what do I do?" She asked politely.

"For now, stand over there and listen." Gobber directed her over to where Hiccup was standing. She started towards him as Gobber continued teaching. As soon as she got in a 2 meter radius of Hiccup, she knew something was wrong.

"Hey." She said simply, hoping she wouldn't have to do much to get him to spill.

"Hey, Astrid!" He said over-enthusiastically. "Fancy seeing you here!" Yep, something's definitely up.

"You already knew I was coming..." She replied, pretending to be ignorant.

"Anyways, enough of the pointless yabbering!" Gobber finished his explanations to the small Vikings. "Let's get some dragons out here and go over to the experts!" Gobber pointed a fat finger at Hiccup and Astrid. The two were taken off guard, and looked at the big-eyed, short 10 year olds who turned to them, expectant.

"A-ah..." Astrid stumbled over her introductions. Luckily Hiccup was able to start them off.

"So! I'm Hiccup, this is Astrid, we're gonna do some dragon training!" It was short but effective.

Hiccup turned and started towards the first of the huge stone doors around the outside walls of the arena, now the only one of which was in use. After the battle with the Green Death, the dragons had been given a new, more humane enclosure system. The first door had been converted into a tunnel that led into what could be described as a dragon stable, with spacious sections for each of the rider-less dragons of the tribe. As the children were led through the walkways of the stable, they stared in awe at the various species of dragon. Hiccup named each species as they passed them like a professional tour guide.

"Ah, that's a Zippleback. And over here we've got a Gronkle. Oh and this little guy is called a Terror." Hiccup was really good at this, Astrid thought to herself as she stared at the back of his head.

"Mr. Hiccup, do we have any Nightfurys here?" A slightly chubby boy asked Hiccup from the back of the pack.

"Ah no, we don't. Toothless is so far the only Nightfury the village has seen."

There was an "Awww" in reply. Another kid spoke up, this time a scrawny little girl.

"Can I have your dragon, Mr. Hiccup?" She asked in a high pitched voice.

"Well, don't ask me. It's him you have to persuade, and that won't be very easy." Hiccup was a total natural with the kids.

Finally they reached the pen they were looking for. "What kind of dragon is that?" The kids murmured. This time Astrid was able to pluck up the courage to answer.

"He's called a Nadder." She said, gesturing at the green dragon in the pen, who was poking his head over the fence curiously. "The same as my dragon. This one's name is Spike"

"How do we know he won't attack us?" A boy asked.

"He won't, silly. Our dragons don't do that anymore." A classmate answered.

"That's right." Hiccup said. "If you're nice to them, then they'll be nice to you."

Astrid smiled at him as he unhooked the lock and pulled the door open. Astrid herded the class back, and Spike stepped out, keen to find out who was visiting him.

"So, all you gotta do is be friendly." Hiccup said, as he slowly approached the dragon, holding out his hand to its nose. The Nadder also approached with caution, and after a slight examine, he deduced that there was no threat, and placed his nose in Hiccup's hand. The children clapped. Next, Astrid did another small demonstration. After that the children took turns at approaching Spike, and created a bond with him in the form of a pat on the nose. Spike was more than happy to be receiving so much attention.

Finally, the class proceeded into the arena, which was no longer enclosed at the top with cage and chain, and Hiccup began teaching them how to fly.

"Let's hurry and wrap this up, a quick lesson's a good lesson!" Gobber shouted.

When the lesson on flying was taught, and the kids were taking turns in the air with Spike, Astrid finally had some time to speak with Hiccup. She approached him as he stood to the side of the arena.

"You're really good with the kids." She said with a smile, and Hiccup jumped at the sudden sound of her voice. 'He's so fragile...' She thought. He turned away from her quickly, unwilling to show her his face. Astrid frowned.

"Are you going to tell me what's bothering you or not?" She decided to get straight to the point.

"B-bothering me?" Playing dumb... "What do you mean?"

"How dumb do you think I am?" Astrid crossed her arms. "Something's definitely up with you. You've been acting weird."

"I've been acting exactly the same as I always do." Hiccup replied, a little too honestly. As if he was disbelieving. Astrid thought maybe he couldn't believe that she had figured him out so easily. She

smiled.

"Oh come on, Hiccup, we've been friends for how long now?" It pained her a tiny bit to say the word 'friends'. "I thought we could talk to each other." She hoped that would break down this wall that he had built around himself. But on the contrary, she saw his face fall even deeper into a sadness she had never seen from him before. She was sincerely concerned.

"Hiccup...?" She reached a hand out to him, but he took a step back from her.

"That's what I thought to, us being such great _friends_ and all..." He muttered, looking straight into her eyes. His emphasis on 'friends' was definitely not good.

But before Astrid could say another word, he turned around, showing her his back.

"Oh and just so you know," Hiccup continued. "My Dad's making me go on that 4 month long hunting trip in the mountains tomorrow." 'Hunting trip? The Rite of Passage hunting trip? Why in the world is Hiccup going...?' Astrid thought. "So, I'll see you later." Hiccup muttered.

"Wait! Hiccup!" She couldn't fit in another word as Hiccup approached Gobber and said something, before running out the entrance tunnel of the arena.

Astrid sighed and stared at her feet. 'Does Hiccup hate me...?'

When the lesson was finally over, and the kids left the training grounds, happy and satisfied, Astrid also walked down the familiar path that led to her house. But when she arrived, she went to Sky's shed instead of into her house. Her mind was too jumbled right now to deal with her mother, so she decided to head to her usual thinking spot, the Cliffside hill just offshore of Berk. She dismounted Sky and made her way straight to the grassy slope, before lying down and staring up at the sky.

It was so silent. The wind passed over her lying figure, the grass around her swayed and danced, Sky curled up peacefully beside her, the clouds moved across her vision, and everything was silent.

It was only then that the 4-month-long hunting trip thing had clicked in her head. Hiccup was going to leave.

'4 months. 4 months of Hiccup not being here, of Hiccup being gone.' Her thoughts kept repeating themselves annoyingly. All she wanted was for them to stop, to leave her alone.

Sky stood up and approached her, before rubbing her nose to her cheek. Astrid looked up at her with a slight laugh.

"What are you doing, Sky?" She sat up and scratched Sky's neck. The wind hit her face instead of passing over her, and she felt something cold on her face due to the wind's impact. She reached her hand up to her cheek, and looked, to see water. Tears. She was crying.

Sky comforted her again, as more and more tears streamed down her

face. She wrapped her arms around her dragon's neck, and Sky made a muffled whine.

"What the hell? Four months?" She shouted at no-one. "What..."

Those painful questions were welling up in her head again.

Why did Hiccup hate her?

Why was he leaving?

Why did she care so much?

As the winds carried her cries across the harsh landscape, silencing them and preventing them from being heard by anyone, the sun set on Berk for the day.

The overly bright light of the sun woke Astrid the next morning.

'Why is the sun so bright? Didn't I close my curtains...?' She opened her eyes to see that she wasn't in her bedroom. She remembered how she had fallen asleep after crying for ages about Hiccup leaving. She also noticed that Sky was lying asleep beside her.

'I can't believe it. Sky must be starving. Why didn't she fly home and tear open the fish basket?'

At that moment, Sky awoke, and moved over to Astrid, nudging her furiously.

"I'm so sorry Sky." Astrid said, still lying on her back. She sighed and closed her eyes. "We should go back and get some food. Mum would be freaking out, too."

"I already fed her." Astrid shot up at the sound of Hiccup's voice, once again bashing their foreheads together.

"Gah! Why do you keep doing that?" Hiccup shouted at her.

"Why do you keep scaring the crap out of me?" Astrid shouted even louder back, before removing her hand from her wounded forehead and staring sadly at the scrawny boy who had caused her so much grief the night before.

"I didn't mean to!" He was saying. "I came because your mum came over to our house late last night, and said you hadn't come home yet. I told her I knew where you'd be."

"So..." Astrid thought out loud. "You've been here all night?"

"Well not really. I was going back and forth getting food for Sky. She wouldn't leave your side, no matter what I said."

Astrid looked appreciatively at Sky, then back to Hiccup. "And you didn't think of just waking me up? That would've saved you a lot of trouble you know." She said sceptically, hiding the enormous amount of sadness she was feeling.

"Well...you looked peaceful..." Hiccup said with a blush.

'He's acting like himself again... that's good.' She smiled at him, at his cute blushing face.

"So, I wanted to talk to you, one more time, before I left." He said, looking at her. Astrid's eyes widened, betraying her for a split-second. She regained herself.

"That's good. I really wanted to speak to you too." She replied. "I really don't want you toâ€", "

"I've come to a decision." He said, before she could finish.

'A decision? Has he decided not to go?' Her hopes grew dangerously high, she was worried they would be crushed.

"I...I'll go on the trip." He said, looking away from her. There it was. Astrid's heart sank.

"But, I'll come back! And when I do, I promise I'll have changed into a strong Viking." He continued. He was starting to sound like one of the kids who he would be accompanying on the trip. "I'll come back as someone who you can rely on, I promise."

'Wait...What was he saying? Does he know about my secret?'

"I know I'm not exactly the coolest guy in the world. So, I'm going to use this trip to my advantage, and become the coolest guy ever! Better than anyone else. So, I need to ask you something."

Astrid was getting confused. "What is it?"

"Can...can you promise me, that you'll wait?" He asked, looking anywhere but at her.

"Wait for what, Hiccup?" Astrid seriously had no idea why he was saying what he was saying.

Frustration overtook Hiccup, and He blurted it all out.

"Wait for me to come back as a strong and cool Viking before you go out with another guy!" He felt like slapping himself again.

Astrid stared wide-eyed at him. There were still questions floating around in her head, like 'What is he saying?', 'Does he know that I hate short guys?', and 'Why does he think that I was going to date another guy?' But the overwhelming happiness had vanquished all the uncertainty she felt. She could only think of one thing to say.

"Sure." She said simply, but her smile said 1000 more words. Hiccup sighed, as if he was relieved. They both sat like that for a short while, staring at each other, and a goofy smile on Hiccup's face. Before he finally decided that it was time for him to go.

"Wait, Hiccup!" Astrid said just before he flew off on Toothless. She boldly lifted herself onto the back of Toothless's saddle. Both the black dragon and Hiccup looked at her sceptically.

"What?" She replied to their looks. "I'm coming to see you off. What

kind of girlfriend would I be if I didn't?"

Hiccup gasped and faced the front, a blush dusting his face. Toothless seemed to let out some form of dragon giggle. Astrid turned to Sky.

"You don't mind do you?" She asked the Nadder. She dragon-shrugged in reply. With that, Toothless took off towards the ship-littered coasts of the village, to Astrid's surprise. She wrapped her arms around Hiccup's torso on instinct. All of a sudden Astrid and Hiccup were brought back to the night flight they had shared not long ago. They both blushed, but Astrid didn't move. Sky, who was following behind them, and Toothless both giggled to each other.

They arrived at the beach and Hiccup hopped off his dragon. Stoic and Gobber were also there, to see off the upcoming Vikings. Hiccup looked over to the bunch of children gathered around a boat docked on one of the wharfs, as well as all the adult Vikings going along to supervise.

"It's going to be really weird not having anyone my own age to talk to for 4 months..." Hiccup complained, before turning around to say goodbye to Toothless. Astrid felt a bit sorry for him. Separating with Hiccup must be really hard for Toothless. As it must also be for his rider. She watched Hiccup stroking the sad dragon for a second, before she got an idea.

"Hmm..." Astrid thought for a second. "I'll be right back." Astrid ran up to the head Viking leading the trip, and muttered a few words to him. After what seemed like a short debate, Astrid ran back to explain to Hiccup, who was totally confused.

"There. I'm a genius. Now you'll have someone your age to talk to." Astrid said with her hands on her hips, quite proud.

"You mean..." Hiccup started, wide-eyed.

"No! Not me!" Astrid assured him. "I convinced them to let you take Toothless. Since you saved the whole village and all. Toothless should be about your age in dragon years."

Hiccup smiled and turned to Toothless, who was still confused.

"You're coming with me." Toothless beamed and jumped on Hiccup enthusiastically. When Hiccup was finally set free from the dragon embrace, he said goodbye to his father and Gobber. They both patted his shoulders in reply. Stoic seemed to be having a pretty tough time, seeing his son 'growing up'. Finally Hiccup came to Astrid.

"I won't say Goodbye, cos that's not right." Hiccup said to himself, trying to think of something to replace that sad word.

Astrid came up with one for him, grabbing him by the shirt, just as she had done before, and joining their lips together briefly but sweetly.

Hiccup was a bit stunned for a second, but by now he had gotten pretty used to surprise kisses.

"What was that for?" He asked.

"I'll tell you when you get back." She replied. "Don't die from the cold."

Hiccup nodded with a smile. And just before he turned away from her for the final time, he reached into the fur jacket he always wore, and pulled out his sketchbook, before placing it in Astrid's hands.

"I'll be back."

He turned, jumped onto Toothless's back, clicked in his metal foot, and took off, leaving Astrid standing on the sand. The boat below him also launched off the shores of Berk, beginning the journey. Toothless shot a bolt of blue fire into the skies like fireworks, and all the parents on the shore waved and shouted. Astrid stood silent as the black spot faded into the clouds.

Only after she was absolutely sure Toothless, and subsequently his rider, were completely out of sight, she opened the sketchbook. Flicking through, she smiled warmly at the countless sketches of Toothless, in all manners of his personality. But her breath caught in her throat when she stopped on the back page. It was going to be a long four months.

**Thank you all so much for your patience! I'm sorry it took so long to get this out! I had a serious case of writer's block! Anyways, I hope the fact that this is a bit longer will make up for it! After this, there's only one more chapter to go. TT-TT Thanks again and please review!**

4. How?

Growing Taller

Disclaimer: I do not own DreamWorks's How to train your Dragon.

Chapter 4: How?

"Land Ho!"

Those two words sent Hiccup into a whole new world of relief and utter bliss. Stepping off the creaking, mouldy wood and onto solid, secure land had seemed like a dream the night before, while he was trying his hardest to sleep among 13 snoring children, with only a potato sack for a pillow. The trip from Berk to the mountain island by row boat took two whole days after all. It was now just entering the dusk of the second day of the trip back home, and Hiccup couldn't wait.

He wanted more than anything to fly straight there on the back of Toothless's neck, skipping the final 2 kilometres of ocean left between him and freedom, but unfortunately, the Nightfury had a lot of recovering to do, and was lying on his belly, asleep, in the middle of the deck. It had only taken Hiccup a week or two after arriving at the hunting grounds to realise that Toothless's reptilian body was anything but ideal for the juvenile winter climate in the

mountains, what with temperatures of minus 20 degrees Celsius and constant blizzards that rendered the skies there un-flyable. So yea, taking toothless probably wasn't one of the best decisions. But then again, Hiccup wasn't the one that made it.

He looked out again over the wet railing of the ship, across the surging seas of Berk, only to have his view blocked by an offshore island cliff face. He gazed up at the grassy hillside on top of the tall island, and smiled after realising just _what_ island cliff face it was. The last time he had seen it was four months ago.

Sure, the poor water supply and the horrible food they were served had caused Hiccup to wish he were home, but the major factor contributing to his homesickness was something much less cynical. A promise he had made, bonding him symbolically to the one back home, who was undoubtedly waiting for him.

"Astrid! Big news!" Ruffnut and Tuffnut had burst through her front door, apparently with big news. The blond looked up from the book she was reading, her blue eyes expectant.

"He's back."

All Astrid could do was gasp. Those two words had sent Astrid into some sort of high made of hope and overwhelming happiness. She beamed a million smiles in one, tossed the book aside and shot towards the door, before running into the shed to get Sky, and following Ruff and Tuff on their Zippleback towards the docks.

On arrival, she saw dozens of Vikings flourishing around the wharfs, massive arms waving like mad. She looked passed the horned helmets and out into the sea. She saw the same boat she had seen 4 months ago growing bigger and bigger as it sped towards her. She squinted as much as she could without closing her eyes, trying to make out the faces on the ship, but it was not yet close enough. She ran forward and joined the horde of yelling parent Vikings, and clasped her hands together, wondering what she might see when the ship finally made it to shore. She only hoped that she would be able to hold back the tears until then.

The boat hit the wharf with a 'thump' and kids and Vikings piled out and into it, desperate to see the ones they hadn't seen for four months. It would be the same for Astrid, had she been able to move. She pushed through huge muscular Viking after Viking, searching for his face, his hand, his synthetic foot, anything. She was in a haze of embraces and tears and happy reunions.

Suddenly the familiar sound of Nightfury wing beats caught her attention. She looked up.

>"Toothless! It's great to see you!" The black dragon was hovering just above the crowd of Vikings, causing bursts of wind to beat down on her. Toothless looked down to her, smiling in reply, before flying to the back of the pack, landing on the hill that looked over the whole mass.<p>

"Wait! Toothless! Where'sâ€"!" Just then, someone bumped into Astrid's back. She fell forward, and landed harshly on her knees. Holding back the urge to beat the crap out of whoever had knocked her over, she turned herself around, still on the ground, and the first this she saw was a glint of sunlight reflecting off metal, a metal

foot, to be exact. Except this metal foot seemed to be two sizes too small for its wearer.

"Ah! Sorraê!" Astrid heard her favourite voice cut off in a gasp as he realised just who he had rudely knocked over. He immediately grabbed her hand and hauled her back onto her feet, staring into her eyes. Astrid found herself lost in his, too. And so they both stood there, beaming like idiots. They both entered a world all their own, away from the haze of shouting and weeping and strong Viking embraces all around them. Until Astrid finally plucked up the courage to tear her gaze away from his forest green eyes and check out the rest of her long-lost boyfriend. And for the second time that morning, she gasped loudly.

"W-what's wrong?" Hiccup asked, a bit freaked out.

"How did you get so hoê"...uh...tall?" Astrid asked, still looking at him up and down, unbelieving of his inhuman 4 month growth rate. And indeed, he was at least a head and a half taller than he was before. Not only that, his hair was a tad longer, hanging just over his eyes teasingly. His shoulders were broad and well built, and his arms seemed to have grown a bit (not too much) buffer under his sleeves.

"Oh. I had a growth spurt. Kinda sudden I know." Hiccup scratched the back of his neck, and developed a pink tinge to his cheeks. "I grew out of my foot while I was there, and had to walk around on a slant for the rest of the time."

Astrid laughed briefly, noticing the clumsy-looking angle in which he was standing on the hill. But that laugh was too much for Hiccup to bear. He moved hesitantly forward, wrapping his strong arms around the small of her back, pulling her closer into an embrace. Astrid blushed, a bit surprised. She had always been the one to make the first move on him. This was something new to her. None-the-less, she didn't pull away. She pulled her arms out from in-between their chests up around his neck, relishing the moment.

"I missed you." Astrid breathed into his neck, closing her eyes.

"You have no idea how much I missed you too" Hiccup replied, as if he was sighing in relief. He pulled away from the hug, and looked Astrid straight in the eyes. "Okay. There's something I have to say that I've been practicing for four months." He said, making Astrid cock her head.

"Astrid Hofferson." He started. Astrid nodded, waiting. When he finally said it, it all came out in a quick blur.

"I-love-you-and-I-want-to-be-with-you-for-the-rest-of-my-life. Will you be my official girlfriend?"

But Hiccup didn't receive the 'become weak at the knees and fall into his arms' reaction he was expecting. Instead, she laughed, happily and joyfully, not mockingly. A light pink dusted her cheeks, and she looked up at him, before reaching up high and bumping him on the head.

"Ow! What was that for?"

"That's for leaving me for four months. And for being stupid." She stated.

"Stupid? But you!" Before he could finish, she presented him with her usual surprise kiss. Except this time she had to stand on her toes to reach his lips. She pulled away quickly, leaving him gobsmacked, again. She loved his expression when she did that.

"That means 'Yes'."

And with that, Hiccup leaned in once again, giving her a taste of her own medicine. His kiss lasted longer and was much more affectionate. Astrid gripped his shoulders as she tried her best to reach high enough. Hiccup gripped her waist to make it easier for her. She could feel their temperatures melding together as and they finally broke apart for air. Puffing, they touched foreheads, a slight laugh escaping Astrid's lips. She was happier than she had ever been before.

They began to attract the attention of the Vikings around them, and Snotlout, Fishlegs, Ruff, Tuff, Gobber and Stoic all cheered for them. But their moment was interrupted when Toothless and Sky, keen to join in on the celebrations, jumped up and knocked them both down. Toothless licked Hiccup's face relentlessly, and he and Astrid burst out in laughter as they lay on the grass with their dragons.

Stoic came over and pounded Hiccup in the back, followed by Gobber. A small crowd gathered around the two laughing Vikings as Hiccup began telling everyone of the not-so-great time he had in the mountains. But even so, he had to be grateful for his father, as something much greater had come out of this. Even if it didn't turn out exactly the way he thought it would, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III and Astrid Hofferson could be together, forever.

He wouldn't change it for the world.

**That's it for my story guys :) hope you all enjoyed, and I hope the ending was satisfying enough. If u did enjoy, please review it would really help me out a lot. I had a lot of fun writing this. I'll apologise now for any annoying grammar or punctuation mistakes I've made so far, I can't be bothered searching for them and fixing them XD. if anyone likes One Piece, then stay tuned, I have an idea for a LuffyXNami fic that I hope I can start on soon. Thankyou all so much and please review ^**

End
file.